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TELLS HOW NESTING AREAS ARE  
BEING RESTORED FOR WATERFOWL

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A start toward restoring to their original use the great hereditary nesting grounds of migratory waterfowl in the United States is now under way. Reporting on current progress of this work, J. Clark Salyer II, in charge of the Division of Migratory Waterfowl, Biological Survey, points out that large areas which have suffered from unwise drainage and from drought are being reclaimed in a national restoration program designed as a partial offset to the rapid decrease in the numbers of waterfowl.

Salyer explains that formerly these prairie nesting grounds in the United States extended from the Canadian border to the Ruthaven Marshes in Iowa, the Nebraska sand hills, and the Black Hills of South Dakota, northwest to Lake Bowdoin in Montana, and by the Des Lacs Lakes and the Turtle Mountains of North Dakota to Mud Lake in Minnesota. "A great breeding ground, it once had the three requisites for waterfowl existence", he says. "Prairie grasses offered the highest type of nesting cover. A thousand lakes and streams and a million snow-filled potholes formerly afforded unlimited food and security. Enemies were few and casual, and the isolation was perfect. Amid such surroundings many a brood of ducklings passed the summer and was on the wing before seeing a human being."

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"Today," he continues, "our part of the hereditary nesting ground has been forsaken by the birds. Man and the weather have combined to destroy what once attracted them. After the early, accustomed mobilization there in spring, the ducks and geese perforce moved on into the upper Canadian prairie region,--a natural continuation of the nesting ground--and not so desperately seared by the drought. The vast numbers of potholes and all but the deepest lakes were dry."

In Department of Agriculture Circular No. 339, entitled "A Program of Waterfowl Restoration," Salyer outlines the Biological Survey plan for restoring some of the nesting areas in this region, and reviews the work already accomplished on several of the refuges that have been established recently.

The program of restoration is being carried out under an allotment of \$8,500,000 from emergency funds. This money is being used for the acquisition, improvement, and administration of wildlife refuge areas, and additional funds totaling between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000 annually are anticipated for later use from the sale of the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp.

Twelve great nesting refuges for waterfowl have been planned to date, with a combined area of approximately 300,000 acres. It is expected that these refuges, when finally conditioned, will be utilized by the birds, and will produce several million ducks each season. It is estimated that during the present generation the production on the entire north-central breeding area was 30,000,000 annually.

Conservationists, officials, individuals, and organizations in all parts of the country have evinced a spontaneous and helpful spirit of cooperation with the Bureau in the restoration program, says Salyer. With such cooperation, assistance, and support continuing, the national program of wildlife restoration, he concludes, will make it possible once again for the waterfowl to occupy their hereditary nesting grounds in numbers approaching their former abundance.

Copies of Circular No. 339, A Program of Waterfowl Restoration, may be obtained at 5 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C.